

# The Daily Charge

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"Telling the MND-Baghdad Story"

Saturday, June 23, 2007

## Baghdad in Brief

### Troops Target Cell Members

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Improvised explosive device (IED) cell members were targeted by Multi-National Division-Baghdad Soldiers during three operations in the northwest region of Baghdad June 22, resulting in the detention of seven suspected insurgents.

"We are tightening the noose on the IED cell members in our area of operations, and disrupting their operations," said Lt. Col. Peter Andrysiak, deputy commanding officer, 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division. "We have been able to increase our troop presence in the more remote areas of our sector because of the increased number of 'surge troops' in MND-B."

In the early morning hours, scouts from the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment raided a suspected insurgent location in an isolated farm house north of Saab al Bor, Iraq. All seven suspected insurgents were captured in the house. The cell is believed to be responsible for planting IEDs on Highway 1 and other locations in the Taji area.

In Al Hitaween, a village in Abu Ghraib, Soldiers from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment conducted an air assault operation to conduct a cordon and search of several homes suspected of housing insurgents.

A resident, questioned at the scene, claimed his home had been taken over by insurgents, but they left when they heard the aircraft. At the home, a small cache was found, including a hand grenade and a pistol.

This operation was the first combat air assault mission performed by 2-5th Cavalry since the Vietnam War.



(Photo by Maj. Sean Ryan, 2-2 Inf. Div. Public Affairs Officer)

Adm. Edmund P. Giambastiani, Vice Chairman of the Joints Chief of Staff, thanks Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil Jr., commanding general of Multi-National Division – Baghdad and the 1st Cav. Div., and presents him a coin June 20 at Forward Operating Base Loyalty.

## Vice Chairman Visits Base Camp

By Spc. Courtney Marulli  
2-2 Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LOYALTY, Iraq – The nation's second-highest ranking military officer was welcomed with open arms by the Soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division here June 20.

Adm. Edmund P. Giambastiani, the seventh Vice Chairman of the Joints Chief of Staff, traveled to meet with Soldiers and to receive an update on issues in the Strike Force Brigade's sector from the commander, Col. Jeffrey L. Bannister. Giambastiani also had lunch with Soldiers.

The admiral told the 2IBCT command team to ensure they ask for anything they need to ensure success. Bannister told Giambastiani the brigade is trying to shape the Iraqi Army boundaries, neighborhoods and Iraqi Army stations to set the Iraqis up for success.

Giambastiani was interested to hear what the Soldiers had to say.

"First of all, I want to thank you for all that you're doing," he told the troops. "Frankly, the reason I come out here is to meet those of you who do this every day. It's a real honor for being here. We

want to find out what you need to keep you safe."

Having a senior member of the Department of Defense take an interest in them impressed many of the Soldiers at this east Baghdad base camp. It was even better to find a hometown connection for one noncommissioned officer.

"(He) was very down-to-earth, personable and gave some good insight to the defense measures they're developing back in the states," said Sgt. 1st Class Robert M. Racioppo of Company C, 2nd Brigade Support Battalion, and a native of Staten Island, N.Y. "We also talked about the Finger Lakes area of upstate New York. He's from the Finger Lakes area, from Conestoga, N.Y. It was a good morale booster. It lets the Soldiers know that FOB Loyalty is on the radar screen of the commanders back in D.C."

"I thought it was cool that he told us about (explosively-formed penetrators) and what they're doing to help us," said Sgt Dennis A. Cote, a native of Bronx, N.Y. "It gave Soldiers some confidence."

Cote, who works in the Strike Force Brigade headquarters added, "It's always good to have someone back in the states risking their lives to come out here."



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Curt Cashour, MNC-I Public Affairs)

## Meeting the Core of the Iraqi Army

Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno, commander of Multi-National Corps - Iraq, talks with members of the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division at Patrol Base Shakarat Wednesday, June 20, 2007.

## Reconciliation Efforts Continue in Baghdad

By Maj. Randall Baucom  
1-1 Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Reconciliation efforts continue to be a top priority for the Multi-National Division-Baghdad brigade operating in the Abu Ghraib and Taji areas near Baghdad.

Capitalizing on the success of the reconciliation of the Sunni tribes in al-Anbar Province, the 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division is pursuing the interest of the tribes in northwestern Baghdad to end the violence and al-Qaeda influence in their area.

The 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, under Lt. Col. Kurt Pinkerton is working with tribes in Abu Ghraib to formalize relations with the Iraqi government and develop a cooperative effort to bring security to their area.

The tribes are working with its members, some who are former members of an Iraqi government rejectionist group, to reconcile with the Coalition, Iraqi Security Forces and the Iraqi Government to bring an end to the violence and al-Qaeda influence.

See Joint Effort Page 4

### Arabic Phrase of the Day

*jnuud*

**Defined:  
soldiers**

### Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



Today

High: 108  
Low: 82



Tomorrow

High: 112  
Low: 82



Sunday

High: 113  
Low: 83

**Commanding General:** Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil, Jr.  
**Public Affairs Officer:** Lt. Col. Scott Bleichwehl  
**Command Information Supervisor:** Master Sgt. Dave Larsen  
**NCOIC, Print Production:** Sgt. Michael Garrett  
**Editor:** Spc. Jeffrey Ledesma  
**Staff Writers:** Sgt. Nicole Kojetin, Spc. L.B. Edgar, Spc. Shea Butler, Pfc. Ben Gable and Pfc. William Hatton  
**Contributing Writers:** Maj. Randall Baucom, Sgt. Robert Yde and Spc.

Courtney Marulli  
**Contact the *Daily Charge* at VOIP 242-4093, DSN 318-847-2855 or e-mail [david.j.larsen@mnd-b.army.mil](mailto:david.j.larsen@mnd-b.army.mil).**

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# Iraqi Parliament Tour Detention Facility

**By Sgt. Robert Yde**  
**2-1 Cav. Div. Public Affairs**

FORWARD OPERATING BASE PROSPERITY, Iraq – Four Iraqi Parliament Human Rights Committee representatives toured the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division's Division Holding Area Annex facility June 20.

While outside groups do occasional inspections of the facility, this was the first time that an official Iraqi group had been inside.

According to Shatha Abdul Razak, a member of the parliament subcommittee focused on issues and situations dealing with Iraqi detainees, his group of lawmakers were particularly interested in how detainees were being treated in American holding facilities.

Before the tour, the small delegation was given a presentation of the facility's operations by the officer in charge of the DHA-A, 1st Lt. Erin Barrett.

"They have recently been comparing Iraqi facilities to Coalition Force facilities trying to get an idea of what the standards should be," the Cartersville, Ga. native explained.

Barrett explained the entire detention process to the Iraqi lawmakers, from the time a detainee is brought in by a capturing unit. She told them how the determination to hold a prisoner or release them is based upon the available evidence, and if a person is processed into the DHA-A how the interrogation process works.

Barrett also explained the structure of a detainee's day-to-day life, including meal times and the type of food that the detainees are provided, times allowed for person-

al hygiene and accommodations that are made to honor their religious needs.

After the presentation, Barrett answered numerous questions from the delegation.

"We explained how we do things and the standard that we operate by," she said. "We answered all their questions, and by the end of it, they said they felt really good about the way we treat the detainees."

Once their questions were answered, the parliament representatives were led on an hour-long tour of the entire DHA-A to include the processing areas, holding areas, showers and bathrooms and the interrogation area.

During the tour they spoke with various staff members about their duties within the facility and they were also able to speak with some of the detainees, as well, regarding the treatment they had received.

According to Barrett, the delegation members seemed to have two concerns primarily on their minds during the tour: whether detainees were being abused and if innocent people were being held.

"They were mostly interested in making sure that

we're not holding people who aren't guilty and making sure we're not abusing detainees," she said.

By the end of the tour the four Iraqi lawmakers said they were pleased with what they saw and hoped to visit

other U.S. holding facilities around Iraq.

"What we have seen today was a lot better than what we were expecting," Razak said. "We didn't expect this kind of hospitality and gentle treatment for the prisoners."



(Photos by Sgt. Robert Yde, 2-1 Cav. Div. Public Affairs)



**Above: Members of the Iraqi Parliament's Human Rights Committee listen to a presentation on the operations of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division's Holding Area Annex before receiving a tour of the facility at FOB Prosperity June 20. Left: Col. Bryan Roberts, commander of the 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div., talks with representatives from the Iraqi PHRC during the tour.**

## Reconciliation Continues in Northwestern Baghdad

### Joint Effort

From Page 2

ence in the Abu Ghraib area.

The tribes have provided 1,900 names of tribesmen, both Sunni and Shia, willing to become members of the Iraqi Police or form a police support unit, operating under the Iraqi Police.

These names are now going through a vetting process and soon those selected, estimated to be around 900, will begin medical and physical fitness testing to ensure they have the ability to perform their duties as policemen. The remainder will form a police support unit.

Following their acceptance, the volunteers will be placed into an intensive two-week training program. Upon graduation, the new volunteers will occupy six police stations and a Joint Security Station in the Abu Ghraib area.

"What's extremely encouraging here is the fact that they want to do this as part of the legitimate government of Iraq," said Lt. Col. Peter Andrysiak, deputy commanding officer, 1st BCT, 1st Cav.

Div. "The volunteers in Abu Ghraib recently cleared Nasir Wa Salam of all al-Qaeda influence, and they are experiencing a level of calm not seen in quite some time. This improved security situation will be met with a renewed period of reconstruction to improve services available to the local populace."

The 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, under Lt. Col. Kevin MacWaters, is also assisting in the reconciliation efforts of various tribes in the Taji area of northern Baghdad. There, members of the tribes, both Sunni and Shia, are striving to come to an agreement with the Iraqi government to start assisting Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces in eliminating extremist influences in their area. They have provided 500 volunteers to be vetted for the development of a police support unit.

"This tribal alliance is crossing sectarian lines in an effort to rid Iraq of the regional intervention by al-Qaeda and Iran," said Andrysiak.

Currently, many of the tribesmen, who are waiting to be vetted, have volun-

teered to establish a "Neighborhood Watch," providing tips and informing Coalition Forces when extremists are operating in their area and securing their own neighborhood and protecting key infrastructure.

Most recently the "Neighborhood Watch" in Taji cleared their area by conducting a search of 113 houses in the Falahat area June 17. During the search, three weapons caches were found.

"This grass-roots uprising against terrorist elements such as al-Qaeda is playing well into our surge offensive operations to rid the extremists of safe havens northwest of Baghdad," said Andrysiak. "Success here will payoff in increased opportunities in reconstruction and economic growth, benefiting both Sunni and Shia, alike."

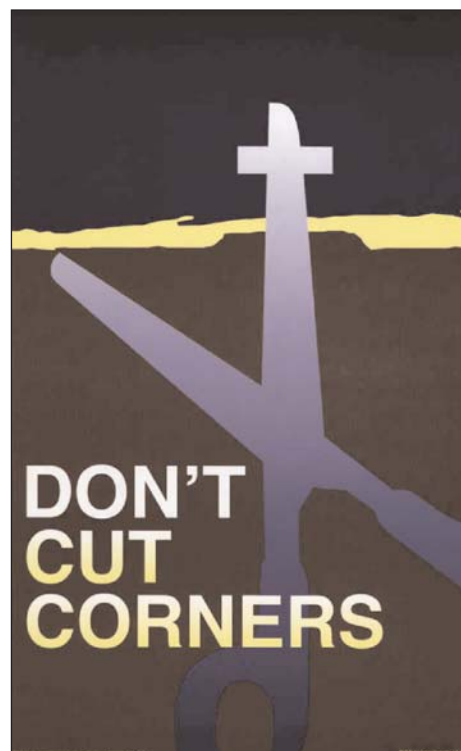
The three caches yielded 1,500 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, four PKC rifle belts, nine AK-47 assault rifle magazines, two bags of blasting caps, 14 AK-47 assault rifles and three PKC rifles. Initially, 18 suspects were apprehended, but 12 were released after questioning.



(Photo by Pfc. Nathaniel Smith, 4-1 Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

### Loud and Clear!

Spc. Jeremiah Webster, a gunner with 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division from Salt Lake City, performs radio checks before a mission June 16.





## Tainted Milestone?

# Slammin' Sammy Goes Deep for #600

BAGHDAD – Buried by the Barry Bonds boondoggle and lost on the lousiest team in the league, Sammy Sosa went deep against his old team June 21 to become the fifth player in major league history to reach 600 career home runs.

Number 600 came in the fifth inning on a 1-2 pitch from the Chicago Cubs' Jason Marquis. Sosa's Texas Rangers even won the game, something they haven't done much of this season. The Rangers, through June 22, have the worst record in the majors.

"It was a cutter I left up in the zone," Marquis told the AP in a post-game interview. "I went away from my strength and he made me pay for it. Other than the fact that it cost us the game, it doesn't really matter."

Marquis joined a good crowd. More than 300 pitchers have served up Sammy his long balls over the years. The first victim was none other than "The Rocket," Roger Clemens, way back in 1989 in Boston's Fenway Park.

Back then, Sosa was also a Ranger – and a five-tool talent headed for stardom. He could run, he could hit, he could hit with power, he could catch and he had a plus-arm better than many a right fielder in the pro game. He ended up achieving his stardom with the Cubs, and helped the "Big Mac," Mark McGwire reach the record books in their duel to delete Roger Maris' single season home run record. The pair brought fans back into the seats, too, a year after a players' strike and owners' lockout did

what even World War II couldn't do – cancel a World Series.

Sosa and McGwire were the face of baseball – McGwire stoic and serious; Sosa playfully professional by contrast.

But the road to baseball immortality got bumpy. First, Sosa is found with a corked bat and is suspended. Later, he argues with new manager Dusty Baker and finds himself leaving town for greener pastures – Camden Yards in Baltimore. There, Sosa never hit his weight and found himself out of a job and out of baseball.

The Rangers brought in Sosa, 38, for a cheap look in spring training. This was the team that drafted him as a gangly kid out of the Dominican Republic. Eighteen years later, they brought him back in what many (myself included) believed to be a publicity stunt to sell spring exhibition tickets to snow birds.

Surprisingly, Sosa not only made the team, but he hit with authority and won the starting designated hitter slot in the line-up. He's been a bargain for the Rangers, with an un-Sosa-like annual salary of just \$500,000. (I know, we the fans are all thinking, "What? ONLY a half-million dollars? How can he make ends meet?!")

"Slammin' Sammy" has hit better than most expected. Through 62 games, he's hit 12 home runs and is seventh in the American League with 53 runs batted in. Still, he's only hitting .242, more than 30 points below

his pedestrian career average.

The question concerning Sosa isn't how many more years he'll play, or if he'll challenge for 700 home runs. He won't. The real question remains whether or not he'll end up enshrined in baseball's Mecca – the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y.

Sosa played in an era when it seems nearly every power hitter was a "juicer." The fact anabolic steroids weren't banned by baseball until years of abuse by its players is really immaterial to me, and to many fans. They were still illegal.

Some steroids are still used for medicinal purposes, but getting an extra 30 pounds of lean muscle mass and an extra 30 feet on your average fly ball just doesn't seem to meet the valid medical reasoning test in my book.

Sosa has reached his personal milestone. He's proven that he still has some skill left. He's the best \$500,000 player in the big leagues, thus far.

But Sammy Sosa isn't a Hall of Famer. He cheated the game and he cheated himself. Four other players have reached the amazing mark of 600 career homers before Sosa – Babe Ruth, Willie Mays, Hank Aaron and, of course, Barry Bonds. The first three are baseball immortals; the last two are poster boys for better living through chemistry.

Personally, I don't want to see either steroid slugger enshrined in Cooperstown. Call me a baseball purist. Call me old school. But don't call on me to applaud either one of these guys.

Want to get something off of your chest (of a sports-related nature)? Shoot us an email at [david.j.larsen@mnd-b.army.mil](mailto:david.j.larsen@mnd-b.army.mil). Your comments may find their way into a future sports column.

Go, Brewers, go!

### Trigger Pull



**Master Sgt. Dave  
Larsen**